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MARTIN LUTHER'S KEY

TO

THE EPISTLE

OF

PAUL TO THE ROMANS.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN

BY REV. WILLIAM G. SCHAUFFLER, D. D.

MISSIONARY AT CONSTANTINOPLE.

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LUTHER ON THE LORD'S PRAYER.

"External and bodily prayer is that outward lip-service which is gone through without any attention, and which strikes the eyes and the ears of men; but prayer in spirit and in truth is the inward desire, the motions, the sighs, which issue from the depths of the heart. The former is the prayer of hypocrites, and of all those who trust in themselves: the latter is the prayer of the children of God, who walk in his fear.

"*Our Father.* There is no name among all names which more inclines us towards God than the name of Father. We should not feel so much happiness and consolation in calling him our Lord, or God, or Judge. By this word Father the compassion of the Lord is moved. There is no voice more lovely or more endearing to a father than that of his child.

"*Who art in heaven.* He who confesses that he has a Father in heaven, acknowledges himself a stranger upon the earth. Hence there arises an ardent longing in his heart, like that of a child who dwells far from his father's country, among strangers, in wretchedness and in mourning. It is as if he said, Alas, my Father, thou art in heaven, and I thy unhappy child am on the earth, far from thee, in the midst of danger, necessity, and tribulation.

"*Hallowed be thy name.* He who is passionate, envious, an evil-speaker, a calumniator, dishonors the name of God: putting to an impious use the vessel that God hath consecrated to himself.

"*Thy kingdom come.* Those who amass wealth, who build sumptuous houses, who seek all that the world can give, and pronounce this prayer with their lips, resemble large organ-pipes which peal loudly and incessantly in the churches, without either speech, feeling, or reason.

"Wherefore do we say, *Our daily bread?* Because we pray not to have the ordinary bread that pagans eat and which God gives to all men, but for *our* bread, *ours* who are children of the heavenly Father. And what is

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This epistle is a distinguished book of the New Testament—the pure gospel—worthy of being committed to memory word by word by every Christian, and of daily study and reflection as the daily bread of the soul. It cannot be read too often or studied too thoroughly: the more we dwell upon it, the more precious and full of relish it becomes. It is in itself a bright luminary, throwing light on the whole canon of Scripture.

First of all, we must become acquainted with the *language* of the book, and see what Paul means by the words, LAW, SIN, GRACE, FAITH, RIGHTEOUSNESS, FLESH, SPIRIT, and the like, otherwise our reading will do us little good.

The word LAW in this epistle must not be understood in a *human* sense, as if it merely concerned what works are to be done, and what abstained from—as is the case with human laws, which are satisfied with the outward performance, though the heart be wanting. God judgeth according to the inmost heart, and hence his law lays hold of that, and is satisfied with no act, yea, it condemns every act, in which the heart is not found, as hypocrisy and a lie. Thus all men are called liars, Psa. 116:11, inasmuch as no one keeps the law of God from his heart, nor can keep it perfectly, every one finding within himself a natural aversion to what is good, and an inclination to what is evil. Where there is not a real delight in holiness, there the heart is not in the law of God; and there also sin certainly reigns, and the wrath

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of God is incurred, although many good works may be done, and a good moral conduct be maintained.

Hence Paul concludes, chap. 2, that the Jews are all sinners, and says the *doers* of the law alone are just with God; meaning by this, that no one *is* such a doer of the law. Hence he says to them, "Wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things:" that is to say, thou livest in outward decency according to the law, and judgest those who do not live so; thou seest the mote in thy neighbor's eye, but the beam in thine own eye thou seest not. Matt. 7 : 3.

For although thou keepest the law in thine outward acts, from fear of punishment and love of reward, thou doest all without any true delight and love for the law, but with aversion and by compulsion; and thou wouldest gladly do otherwise, but for the terrors of the law. The conclusion is inevitable, that in thy deepest soul thou art an enemy of the divine law. What does it signify then if thou teach others not to steal, while thou art a thief in thine own heart, and wouldest be one outwardly if thou daredst? What if thou teach others to understand the law, and never hadst a true understanding of it thyself? Besides all this, the law causes sin to abound, as the apostle says, chap. 5 : 20; because, as man becomes more and more an enemy to the law, the more and greater are the demands it makes upon him which he is utterly unable to meet.

Therefore Paul says, chap. 7 : 14, "*The law is spiritual.*" What does this mean? Answer: If the law was carnal, it could be satisfied with works. But now that it is spiritual, no one can satisfy it, unless all that he does in accordance with it be done freely and from the heart. But such a heart no one can give except the Spirit of God, who brings the man so to receive the law that he delights in it from his heart, and obeys it in every part, not from fear or by compulsion, but freely and cheerfully. Thus the law is spiritual, and is to be loved and obeyed

in a spirit of holy love, every one of its precepts demanding the same spirit. Where this spirit is not in the heart, there dwelleth sin, aversion, and enmity against that law which is ever holy, just, and good.

Let it then be deeply impressed on your heart, that it is a very different thing to "*do the deeds* of the law," from what it is to "*keep* the law."

The "*deeds of the law*" consist of all that a man does or can do merely by his own choice and in his own strength. But as along with, and under cover of these "deeds," there remaineth in the heart aversion and resistance to the law, rendering compulsion necessary, such deeds are not acceptable to God. This is what Paul means, chap. 3 : 20, when he says, "By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight." Here you see what deceivers those are, who teach men to prepare themselves by good works for the reception of grace. How can that man prepare himself by works for any thing good, who performs no good deed without aversion of heart and compulsion? What pleasure can God have in a deed performed with unwillingness of heart?

To *keep* or *fulfil* the law is, to obey it with heartfelt delight and love; to lead a just and godly life freely and from choice, and not from constraint of either law or penalty. Such delight in unconstrained love the Holy Spirit pours abroad in our hearts, as Paul says, chap. 5 : 5. But this spirit is not given except in, with, and by faith in Jesus Christ, as we are taught in the introductory part of the epistle. In like manner, faith comes only by the word of God, the gospel, which preaches Christ—that he is the Son of God and the Son of man, and how he died and rose again for our sakes. See chap. 3 : 25; 4 : 25; 10 : 9.

And hence it is that *faith alone* justifies and causes the law to be fulfilled in us; for it brings to us the Spirit out of the treasury of Christ's merits. The Spirit makes the heart buoyant and free as the law requires it to be, and thus good deeds proceed from faith itself. Of this

the apostle speaks, chap. 3 : 31, after rejecting all "the deeds of the law," so that it almost seems as though he was about to abolish the law by faith. "God forbid," says he; "yea, we *establish* the law by faith;" that is, we *fulfil it by faith.*

Sin, in scripture language, is not merely the outward work done by the body, but all that which inwardly stirs and impels to outward action, namely, the heart with its springs and powers. The Scriptures regard particularly *the heart*, and look to the *root* and the *main-spring* of all sin, which is the "evil heart of unbelief." Thus, just as *faith* alone justifies, and imparts to the soul a delight in good outward works, so *unbelief*, the only spring of sin, excites the carnal mind to wicked outward acts, as was the case with Adam and Eve in paradise. Gen. 3 : 6. Hence it is that Christ designates *unbelief* as *the great sin.* John 16 : 8, 9. The Spirit will "reprove the world .... of *sin*, because they *believe not* in me." Therefore also, as with the good or bad fruits of the tree, before good or bad works are done there must be *faith* in the heart, or there will be *unbelief*, the root, sap, and power of all sin. This unbelief is the great sin which the woman's seed, Christ, must crush. Gen. 3 : 15.

Grace and gift have this distinction: *grace* is God's favor and kindness towards us, which induce him to give unto us Christ, and to pour out in us the Spirit with his *gifts.* This we may clearly see in chap. 5 : 15, where Paul speaks of "the *grace* of God, and the *gift* by grace." Although the *gifts* of the Spirit in us are daily growing, and yet never come to perfection here, so that there remain in us sinful emotions and lusts which war against the soul, chap. 7 : 14, Gal. 5 : 17, still, *grace* effects so much that we are accounted just before God. His *grace* is not cut up and parcelled out as his *gifts* are, but receives us at once and entirely into the divine favor, for the sake of Christ our Mediator and Intercessor, and then the gracious *gifts* begin to dwell in us. Thus in the seventh chapter Paul calls himself a sinner, and yet he says in

the eighth chapter that by the grace of God there is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus. In the flesh, not as yet thoroughly mortified, we are still sinners; but because we believe in Christ, and have the first-fruits of the Spirit, God is gracious to us, so that he will not condemn us, but will deal with us according to our faith in Christ, till sin be quite mortified and dead.

FAITH is not what many fancy it to be, who talk a great deal about faith but without regard to its connection with sanctification of life or good deeds accompanying faith: they fall into error, and say, We are not justified by faith alone, but by good works also. Thus men deceive themselves, because, when they hear the gospel, they are at once ready to make to themselves a faith in their own strength. But as this is merely a human imagination by which the heart itself is not reached, it produces no good fruit, and no sanctification follows *such* a faith.

But TRUE FAITH is a divine work in us, which changes us, and regenerates us, so that we are "born of God." John 1:13. It mortifies the old man, and makes us different men in heart and mind, accompanied as that faith is by the Holy Spirit. Oh, this faith is living, active, efficient, powerful, so that it is quite impossible that it should not incessantly be doing good. It does not stop to ask whether any good work is to be done, but before the question can be put it has accomplished it; it is continually up and doing. And he that is not such is a faithless man; he gropes about in the dark for faith and good works, and knows nothing of either, but merely multiplies words about faith and works without true knowledge.

Faith is a living confidence in the grace of God, so firm that a man may die a thousand deaths rather than doubt. And such confidence in and experience of divine grace makes us happy, frank, and cheerful towards God and all creatures. This is wrought by the Holy Ghost through faith. Hence such a man is willing and forward, without any compulsion, to do good to every one—to

serve all men, and to suffer all things, for the love and glory of that God who hath shown towards him such grace. Thus it is as impossible and absurd to separate works from faith, as it is to separate heat and light from fire. Beware, therefore, of thine own preconceived notions about faith, and pray to God that he will work faith in you; for without his power you will remain without faith eternally.

Righteousness is identical with this very faith. It is called the righteousness of God, because God is the giver of it, and "*counts it for righteousness*," for the sake of Christ our Mediator, and by it disposes a man to do all that is righteous in God's sight. By faith man conquers sin, and obtains a love for the commandments of God. Thus he gives to God the glory due to him, and seeks to discharge the debt of a creature to the Creator. As to his fellow-men, he serves them willingly in whatever way he can, meeting every just claim they have upon him. Such "righteousness" is not, and cannot be the effect of nature, or human power; for as no one can procure faith of himself, so of himself merely he cannot lay aside unbelief: how then will he overcome so much as a single sin, though it be the very least? All is falsehood, hypocrisy, and sin, which is done without faith and in a state of unbelief, be its gloss ever so bright. Rom. 14 : 23.

Flesh and spirit must not be understood in such a way as if that only was *flesh* which belongs to works of unchastity, and that only *spirit* which belongs to inward pious feelings; but according to Paul, just as according to Christ himself, John 3 : 6, flesh is "*all that which is born of flesh*," namely, the whole man, with body and soul, reason, and all the senses and powers; because all that is in him naturally loves what is carnal. Thus he is called "flesh," or "carnal," who, being without grace, occupies himself with religious things, talking and dogmatizing as you may see in Gal. 5 : 20, where heresies, and consequent emulations and strife and variance are reckoned among these carnal works.

Again, in Rom. 8 : 3, where Paul says the "law" is "weak through the flesh," he alludes not to unchastity merely, but to all sins, most of all to unbelief, which is the vice seated in the very depths of the soul.

Again, a man may be *spiritual*, although occupied in the most common outward works, as Christ was when he washed the disciples' feet, or Peter when he was guiding his boat or fishing. "Flesh" or "carnal" is every man whose inward and outward life and works have for their object his own carnal profit and temporal prosperity. "Spirit" or "spiritual" is every one who inwardly and outwardly lives and labors with a constant and single view to his spiritual good and the future life and bliss of his soul.

Without such an understanding of these terms, you can neither understand this epistle of Paul, nor any other book in the Bible. Beware, therefore, of all expositors who take these terms in a different and mistaken sense.

And now to the epistle itself.

It is the duty of every gospel preacher to proclaim the law, and to expose, reprove, and condemn men's sins, and to maintain that all who live out of the Spirit, and without faith in Christ, live in sin; so that men may come to a knowledge of themselves and their own utter misery, and may be led to humble themselves and seek for salvation.

In CHAPTER 1, accordingly, Paul reproves open transgressions and unbelief, such as are obvious, like the sins of the heathen who live without God; and says God's wrath is to be revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men. For although they know, and perceive daily, that there is a God, human nature without grace is so wicked in itself, that it neither thanks God nor glorifies him, but shuts out from view all God's mercies, and sinks deeper and deeper, till having become idolaters, men fall into the most abominable sins, and practising every vice without shame, favor the same practices in others.

In CHAPTER 2, Paul extends the reproof to those also who seem to live well outwardly, or commit their outward sin in secret, as the Jews did; all such are hypocrites, living honestly and morally as seen by men, but without love and desire for God's law, being in heart enemies to it. Yet, as the hypocrite's way is, they dare to judge others, thinking themselves pious and pure, while in fact they are filled with covetousness, hatred, pride, and all uncleanness. Matt. 23 : 25. These are they who despise the riches of God's goodness, and after their hardness of heart treasure up unto themselves wrath. Thus Paul, like a faithful expounder of the law, declares that none are without sin, and denounces the wrath of God upon all who reject Christ and salvation by him, as hard-hearted and impenitent.

In CHAPTER 3, he unites Jews and Gentiles, and says they are all sinners before God alike, except that the Jews had the word of God; and that while but few of them believed in it, God's faithfulness and truth remain firm, notwithstanding their unbelief. Here he adduces a declaration of Scripture, from Psa. 51 : 4, that God is justified in his sayings. Then, returning to his subject, he proves by Scripture that all men are sinners, that by the deeds of the law no man can be justified, and that the law is given that men might receive the knowledge of sin. This done, he begins and teaches *the true way by which men are to become godly and to be saved.* He says we are all sinners, and come short of the glory of God, and are justified without the merit of works through faith in Christ, who has procured justification by his blood, and has become a propitiation for us; through whom God is ready to forgive all our former sins, that he may prove that we are saved by *his righteousness* alone, received *by faith,* all of which the gospel reveals and brings with it, after the law and the prophets had borne their testimony to it in ages past. Thus the law is established by faith, while the boasted "*deeds* of the law" as a ground of justification, and all their glory, are abolished and set aside.

In CHAPTER 4, after having exposed sin, and proclaimed the way of faith unto justification through the first three chapters, the apostle begins to meet objections; and he takes up first that most common one of all, urged by most men when they hear for the first time of *faith justifying without works*, and say, Shall we then do no more good works? He considers the case of Abraham, and asks himself, What has Abraham accomplished by his good works? Were they all in vain? Were his works of no use? And he concludes that Abraham was justified without any works, by faith alone; so much so, that the Scriptures call him just by faith alone, even before the "work" of circumcision, Gen. 15 : 6. But if circumcision—which was certainly a work of obedience—did nothing towards his justification, though God expressly enjoined it, it is not to be presumed that any other work could have proved efficient for that purpose. On the contrary, as the circumcision of Abraham was an outward sign by which he proved his state of justification by faith, so were all his other good works outward signs produced by faith, showing, as good fruits, that he was inwardly justified and righteous before God.

By this powerful scripture proof Paul establishes his doctrine concerning faith, chap. 3, and then brings forth another witness, David in Psa. 32, who also testifies that a man is justified without the deeds of the law, though when once he *is* justified he does not remain without works. The apostle extends the principle, and applies it to all other deeds of the law; and draws the conclusion, that the Jews cannot be the heirs of Abraham on the ground of their descent from him merely, much less through the deeds of the law; but they must first have Abraham's faith, if they would be his heirs indeed—because Abraham himself was justified by faith *before* either the law of Moses or circumcision existed, and he thus had become the father of *all who believe*. Besides, the law worketh wrath, but never grace, since no man observes it with love and a willing mind; and thus the deeds

of the law bring condemnation, rather than grace or pardon. The conclusion is, that *faith* alone can and must obtain the grace promised to Abraham, and that examples like those adduced are written for the very purpose that we might *believe*.

In CHAPTER 5, he speaks of the fruits and effects of faith, such as peace, joy, love towards God and all men, the consciousness of safety, boldness and cheerfulness, and courage and hope in tribulations and trials. All these things result where there is true faith, on account of the abounding blessings which God imparts to us in Christ. He gave him up to die for us, not only without our asking for it, but even when we were yet enemies.

And now we have it clearly before us that faith alone justifieth without works; and yet that it by no means follows from this that no good works should be done, but rather that in this way, and this only, such works pleasing to God are produced. Of all this those that strive to be justified by the deeds of the law know nothing. They are occupied in a work of mere delusion, in which there is neither peace nor joy, nor any consciousness of real safety, love, hope, or consolation, and which bears none of the characteristics of a truly Christian faith or pious life.

The apostle next tells us whence sin and righteousness, death and life come, and contrasts the two chief characters, Adam and Christ. What he says amounts to this: Christ must have come, a second Adam, that he might bequeath and transmit unto us his righteousness by a new spiritual birth through faith, just as the first Adam bequeathed and transmitted to us sin, by the old birth of the flesh. All this makes it clear that no man can bring himself out from sin unto righteousness by works, any more than he can help having been born of the flesh. And this is farther confirmed by the fact that the divine law, by which, if not sinners, we might be saved and established in a state of righteousness, not only has brought us no help, but has increased the trans-

gression—because the lusts of fallen nature increase with the increasing resistance of the law to them. So then the very law itself makes Christ the more indispensable to us, and us the more in need of his grace to come to our help.

In CHAPTER 6, Paul considers the particular work of faith, the contest of the Spirit against the flesh for the progressive mortification of the sin which still remaineth after justification, and teaches us that faith does not free us from sin in such a sense that we may settle down inactive, idle, and secure, as though sin was annihilated. We learn that sin still exists; but that it is no longer a cause of condemnation, because faith contends against it. Even though justified by grace, we have our hands full while we live to subdue our bodies, mortify our lusts, and subjugate our members to be obedient to the Spirit and not to lusts, so that we may be conformable unto the death and the resurrection of Christ, carry out our baptismal engagements and obligations—baptism symbolizing our death to sin and our new life through grace—until, entirely purified and free from sin, we rise bodily from the dead through Christ, and live for ever.

And this, he says, is promised us because we are "no more under the law, but under grace." For he explains farther, to be without law is not to be living without any reference to the law, but it means not being *under* the law. To be *under* the law is to be engaged in legal works without grace, in which state sin exercises its dominion through the law over that nature which is so utterly contrary to the law. This is a state of great sinfulness. But grace makes the law a delight to us; consequently sin loses its power in the law, and the law is no more against us, but in league with us.

And this is true freedom from sin and from the law, of which he writes to the end of this chapter, maintaining that it is a freedom to do good only, and that with delight, and to live godly without the compulsion of any law. This liberty is a *spiritual* liberty which does not abrogate

the law, but which affords and gives what the law requires, namely, love for and delight in that which is good.

Just as if thou hadst a creditor, and couldest not pay. There would be but two ways of getting rid of him; either he must forgive the debt, or some friend must pay it for thee, and thus satisfy the creditor's demand. In this latter way Christ *has* freed us from the law. It is therefore not a wild, carnal liberty, intended to be idle, but one which is doing much and constantly, and yet is free from the condemnation of the debt, and finds the demands of the law no longer galling.

In CHAPTER 7, this is illustrated by a comparison drawn from married life: When the husband dies, the wife is free; the connection on both sides is dissolved, so that the wife is really free to marry another, which she could not have done before her first connection was dissolved. So our conscience is bound to the law while the "old man" is alive in sin; but when he is mortified and dead, the conscience is free; their connection is dissolved: not that conscience might feel free to be idle, but free to be united to Christ, the second and true husband, to bear fruit unto life eternal.

Paul then goes on to illustrate the nature of sin, how it stirs and resists when coming under the restraint of the law. For the "old man" hates the law the more, the less he can pay what the law requires and claims. Sin is the very nature of the old man, nor does he change himself; therefore the law is his torture and his death. Not as though the law was not good, but that human nature is wicked, and will not suffer the demands of the holy law upon it.

Therefore Paul concludes, that where the law is rightly understood, it but reminds us of our sin, brings us unto death by it, and calls down upon us the penalty of eternal wrath; as the experience of that conscience which the law has reached with its requisitions and terrors clearly enough shows. So then we must have something besides the law, if we are to become godly

and to be saved. But they who have no true knowledge of the law are blind, go on carelessly, and think they can accomplish all by their own deeds, not considering that the law requires a willing and cheerful heart.

Then the apostle shows how flesh and spirit contend with one another in man, illustrating it by his own experience, that we may learn what it is to mortify sin in our members. He calls the spirit and the flesh each "a law," because as God's law demands and urges, so does the flesh urge its demands against the Spirit, determined to gratify its own desires. And so also, on the other hand, does the Spirit urge his demands against the flesh, equally determined to have his way. And this contest continues with us, in a measure, while we live, in various degrees in different persons; and yet withal the whole contest is occasioned by what is in the renewed man himself in whom it is carried forward, he being in a sense flesh and spirit striving against each other until the Spirit at last entirely prevails.

In CHAPTER 8, he comforts the Christian in this warfare with the consideration that the flesh can no more bring him into condemnation; and goes on to illustrate the character of the flesh and of the spirit, and how the spirit comes from Christ, who has given us his Holy Spirit, by which we are made spiritual, and which subdues the flesh and assures us that we are the children of God, however severe the contest of the flesh may be in us, if so be that we follow the Spirit, and resist and mortify sin. And because there is no better outward means to subdue the flesh than tribulation and suffering, the apostle comforts us in them by pointing us to the assistance of the Spirit, to the love of Christ, and the sympathy of "the whole creation," saying that the Spirit groaneth in us, and that "the whole creation" groans together with us, that we might become free from flesh and sin. Thus we see how chapters 6, 7, and 8 join in setting forth the great work of faith, which is, to mortify the "old man" and subdue the flesh.

In CHAPTERS 9, 10, and 11, he discourses on the eternal purpose of God, upon which depends ultimately the question who shall believe and who not, who shall become free from sin and who not; and this in order that the matter of our piety and faith should rest in God's hand. And of this there is the highest possible need; for we are so weak and wavering that, if the matter rested with us, surely not ONE soul would be saved; Satan would undoubtedly overcome us all. But now, as God is sure of his own purpose which cannot fail, and which none can hinder, we have hope even amid the hottest contest against sin.

But here firm limits must be put upon those presumptuous spirits who speculate on this subject, and who begin with eternity past, undertaking to scan the unfathomable abyss of God's purposes, and who with useless grief and anxiety ask whether *they* are elected or not. These procure their own fall, for they will either despair or plunge into carnal security.

But do thou follow this epistle in its order, and occupy thyself first of all with Christ and his gospel, that thou mayest get a true knowledge of thine own sins and his grace. Then go on and contend against sin, as chapters 1–8 teach thee. When thou hast got into the eighth chapter, under much tribulation and many a cross, thou art prepared to learn, from chapters 9–11, how precious that divine purpose is, and how full of consolation. For without the experience of sufferings, trials, and death-struggles, no one can look at these eternal purposes of God without a secret stir of indignation. Therefore the old man must be mortified first, before he can bear such truths.

In CHAPTER 12, the apostle teaches the order of true worship, and makes every Christian a priest—to sacrifice, not cattle or money, as in the law, but his own body, in the mortification of his sinful desires. Then he describes the outward walk of Christians, in the Christian order and rule: how they are to teach, preach, rule,

serve, give, suffer, love, live, and do towards friends and foes. These are the works in which a Christian is engaged, for, as already observed, faith is never idle.

In CHAPTER 13, he enjoins a proper reverence for secular powers, and obedience to them, which powers have been ordained, that although they cannot make men pious, they may at least effect so much that pious men may live in outward peace and under protection, and that the wicked may not do evil without fear. These powers are to be honored by the pious, although *they* have no need of them for regulating their own conduct. Finally he sums up all with love, and closes with the example of Christ, that we should do as he did, and walk in his footsteps.

In CHAPTER 14, we learn that the weak in faith should be dealt with gently and tenderly; and that Christian liberty may not be used for others' harm, but for the strengthening of the feeble. For where that is not done there is contention and contempt of the gospel, of which, notwithstanding, we are all alike in the highest need. It is therefore better, in his view, that we should yield somewhat to them that are weak in faith till they become stronger, than that gospel truth should be entirely shut out.

In CHAPTER 15, he presents Christ as our example in this matter, that we may bear with the weak, who are more liable to fall into sin, or whose manners are not so pleasant; that we should not suddenly cast them away, but bear with them, if peradventure they may recover. For thus Christ did with us, and continues to do daily, bearing with much that is wrong and untoward in our ways, together with all manner of imperfection, and affording us his help incessantly. Then, to conclude, he prays for them, notices their consistent piety, and commends them to God. He speaks of his ministry and doctrine, makes a delicate appeal to them in behalf of the poor in Jerusalem, and opens freely those feelings of love of which his heart was full, of which he ever spoke, and by which he was actuated.

The LAST CHAPTER is one of salutations, but with them he mingles warnings against false doctrines and traditions of men, which creep in unawares and create offence—as though he had clearly foreseen that from Rome, and by the Romans, there should come in the seductive and offensive canons and decretals, and all the insect host of human laws and ordinances, with which the world is deluged. These have rendered nugatory this epistle and all the holy Scriptures, together with the Spirit of God and faith; so that nothing was left at last to the followers of Rome but that universal idol the belly, whose servants indeed they are, as Paul says in this chapter, verse 18. May God save us all from them.

Thus we have found in this epistle, set forth in richest abundance, what is needful for a Christian to know: namely, LAW, GOSPEL, SIN, CONVICTION, GRACE, FAITH, RIGHTEOUSNESS, CHRIST, GOD, GOOD WORKS, LOVE, HOPE, and the FELLOWSHIP OF THE CROSS; also how we are to conduct towards all men, whether pious or sinners, strong or weak, friends or foes, as well as towards ourselves. All of which is founded upon and confirmed by Scripture, with the experience of the apostles and prophets, so that nothing more can be desired. It appears, indeed, that Paul wished to embody in this epistle, in a condensed manner, the whole Christian evangelical doctrine, and prepare an entrance into the right understanding of the Old Testament. For without doubt he that rightly understands this epistle from the heart, has the light and essence of the Old Testament in him. Let therefore every Christian keep up a living acquaintance and constant intercourse with this book; for which may God grant his grace. Amen.

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this bread of God? It is Jesus Christ our Lord: 'I am the living bread which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.' For this reason—and let us not deceive ourselves—all sermons and all instructions that do not set Jesus Christ before us and teach us to know him, cannot be the daily bread and the nourishment of our souls.

"But what is it then to know Jesus Christ, sayest thou; and what advantage is derived from it? I reply, To learn and to know Jesus Christ, is to understand what the apostle says: 'Christ is made unto us of God, wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.' Now this you understand, if you acknowledge all your wisdom to be a condemnable folly, your own righteousness a condemnable iniquity, your own holiness a condemnable impurity, your own redemption a miserable condemnation; if you feel that you are really before God and before all creatures a fool, a sinner, an impure, a condemned man, and if you show, not only by your words, but from the bottom of your heart, and by your works, that you have no consolation and no salvation remaining except in Jesus Christ. To believe, is none other than to eat this bread from heaven."

LUTHER BEFORE THE DIET OF WORMS.

Having refused to retract his books, or his doctrines, he concluded thus:

"I am but a mere man, and not God; I shall therefore defend myself as Christ did. 'If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil,' said he. John 18:23. How much more should I, who am but dust and ashes, and who may so easily go astray, desire every man to state his objections to my doctrine.

"For this reason, by the mercy of God I conjure you, most serene emperor, and you, most illustrious princes, and all men of every degree, to prove from the writings of the prophets and apostles that I have erred. As soon as I am convinced of this, I will retract every error, and be the first to lay hold of my books and throw them into the fire."

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"Thus, commending myself to your august majesty and to your most serene highnesses, I humbly entreat you not to suffer the hatred of my enemies to pour out upon me an indignation that I have not merited."

When he had ceased speaking, the Chancellor of Treves, the orator of the diet, said indignantly, "You have not answered the question put to you. You were not summoned hither to call in question the decisions of councils. You are required to give a clear and precise answer. Will you, or will you not retract?"

Upon this Luther replied, "Since your most serene majesty and your high mightinesses require from me a clear, simple, and precise answer, I will give you one, and it is this: I cannot submit my faith either to the pope or to the councils, because it is clear as the day that they have frequently erred and contradicted each other. Unless therefore I am convinced by the testimony of Scripture, or by the clearest reasoning; unless I am persuaded by means of the passages I have quoted; and unless they thus render my conscience bound by the word of God, *I cannot and I will not retract*, for it is unsafe for a Christian to speak against his conscience." And then, looking round on this assembly before which he stood, and which held his life in its hands, he said, "HERE I STAND, I CAN DO NO OTHER; MAY GOD HELP ME. AMEN."

The assembly was thunderstruck. Many of the princes found it difficult to conceal their admiration. The emperor, recovering from his first impression, exclaimed, "This monk speaks with an intrepid heart and unshaken courage." The Spaniards and Italians seemed confounded, and soon began to ridicule a greatness of soul which they could not comprehend.

"If you do not retract," said the Chancellor, as soon as the diet had recovered from the impression produced by Luther's speech, "the emperor and the states of the empire will consult what course to adopt against an incorrigible heretic." At these words Luther's friends began to tremble; but the monk repeated, "May God be my helper, for I can retract nothing."